

## Trade with Cuba

The opening of trade with Cuba will benefit American farmers, the maritime and transportation industries, and businesses that provide ancillary goods and services to those industries. This is the belief of those who participated in the U.S. Agricultural/Wood Products Sales to Cuba Conference held in Cancun, Mexico in February.

The Port of Galveston participated as a charter sponsor for the U.S./Cuba Conference in 2002 and sponsored again in 2003, as well as attending and exhibiting.

For three days of the four-day conference, American farmers and business and trade officials attended the U.S./Cuba Conference in Cancun. On the fourth day, participants traveled to Havana, Cuba to meet with senior officials from the Cuban government and two U.S. Senators, and then were addressed by President Fidel Castro at the International Convention Center in Havana.

Captain John G. Peterlin III, Senior Director of Marketing and Administration, represented the Port of Galveston at the conference and at meetings in Cuba.

“There is a large market for agricultural trade with Cuba,” stated Peterlin. “The Port of Galveston wants to position itself to handle agricultural commodities grown in the U.S. and shipped to Cuba. The Port has a relationship with ADM/Farmland, which operates the export grain elevator at the Port of Galveston. ADM’s success in selling product to ALIMPORT (the Cuban state-owned company responsible for the purchase and importation of all food and agricultural products) will benefit their Galveston operation. One of the largest customers for ALIMPORT is ADM. The first shipment of wheat sent to Cuba since the embargo in 1961 was shipped from the ADM/Farmland elevator at the Port of Galveston in early January last year.”

The 2002 U.S.-Cuba Agricultural Sales Conference was the first time that members of the U.S. Congress, Senior Cuban officials and members of the U.S. agricultural community had been able to come together in one place to address the issue of U.S.-Cuban trade.

“The Port was fortunate to be able to participate in this conference once again and to continue to maintain contact with Cuban Government officials,” added Peterlin. “This was also an ideal circumstance to market Galveston to a host of shippers all in the same location. Opportunities like that are invaluable.”

According to an October 2001 study undertaken by Texas A&M University under contract with The Cuba Policy Foundation, the State of Texas ranks fifth on the list of states most likely to benefit most from the opening of trade between the U.S. and Cuba. Exports from the agricultural, fishery and forest products sectors forecast at over \$53 million and employment projections reach over 1,400 new jobs in the state related to that trade.

Trade with Cuba is very important to the Port of Galveston, which has a long previous history of trading with Cuba prior to the trade embargo imposed in 1961. Agricultural products make up a large part of the Port’s business. The Port sees great opportunities in agricultural exports for the re-establishment of trade between the Port of Galveston and Cuba. The lifting of the 40-year old trade embargo against Cuba would be a very positive development for the Port of Galveston,

Deleted: ..

which would be benefit from the shipment of other commodities and cargoes in addition ~~to~~  
agricultural products.

Deleted: to agricultural